



STURGIS AMBULANCE SERVICE



2015 ANNUAL REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The Ambulance Service serves the residents of Sturgis as well as communities in western Meade County and eastern Lawrence County including lower Boulder Canyon. Service territory also includes the I-90 corridor between exits 40 and 28, north to the Belle Fourche River, and along Highway 79 to 194th Street. This is a service area of approximately 500 square miles, primarily in Meade County.

The Ambulance Service also serves the Fort Meade Veterans' Hospital and Sturgis Regional Hospital by transporting patients to and from other facilities in the Hills.

The Ambulance Service also takes intercepts from the communities of Newell, Faith, Eagle Butte, and Enning as required by existing Memorandums of Understanding for Advanced Life Support (ALS) care.

The Ambulance Service is also very active with outreach to the Sturgis community.

In 2015, we saw increased support to the Lead - Deadwood communities as the Regional Emergency and Ambulance facility there has been undergoing staffing and restructuring challenges. We supported mainly through inter-facility transfers.

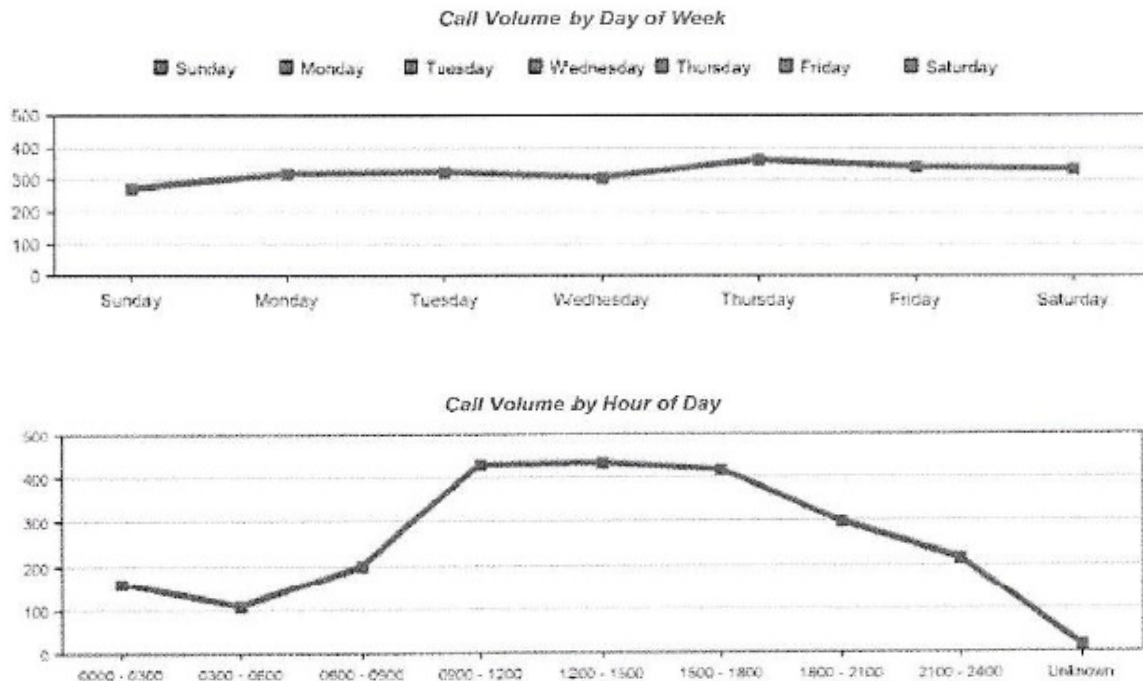
ANNUAL CALL VOLUME

The Ambulance Service was dispatched out for 2,273 calls in 2015, an increase of 16.21% versus 2014 call volume. Each year since 2011, the Service has seen its call volume increase in double digits. In fact, we have more than double our call volume since 2009.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Calls</u>	<u>Increase versus Prior Year</u>
2009	1,076	-
2010	1,191	9.66%
2011	1,385	14.01%
2012	1,593	15.02%
2013	1,769	11.05%
2014	1,956	10.57%
2015	2,273	16.21%

In 2015, the Service continued to staff three staggered shifts the station during the day (6am to 6pm, 10am to 10pm, and 8am to 4pm). We have one crew on from 6pm to 6am with early evening support from the daytime 10am to 10pm crew. We often try to have a stand-by crew lined up in case the primary crew(s) are called out. The 10am to 10pm crew was implemented in 2014 in order to respond appropriately to this increased call volume. Further, the Service has incentive plans in place to insure stand-by coverage at night for faster response time.

The Ambulance Service is busy throughout the week, although calls are slightly higher on Thursday, Friday and Saturdays. We are also busier during the daytime hours, with 77.88% occurring between 6am and 9pm and 56.01% occurring between 9am and 3pm. These statistics confirm the need for the staggered 3 daytime crews. It is also important to note that the average duration of call is



We continue to use the ImageTrend EMS Service Bridge for reporting. This system links to our billing software eliminating the need for redundant data entry. ImageTrend also provides much more detailed analytics about our call volume than our prior software package. Here are some of the highlights.

68.32% of the calls in 2015 originated in Sturgis. 17.73% originated at Fort Meade VA facilities.
 64.80% of our call volume was 911 Emergent.
 79.94% of the time, EMS staff transport the patient. Our rate of refusals for care is 10.21%.

87.25% of the time our crews are enroute to a dispatched call in less than 3 minutes. Our average times to be enroute is 2 minutes, 12 seconds. In a field where minutes literally make the difference between life and death of a patient, this average time to enroute is critical for our community.

82.89% of our calls have been Advanced Life Support (ALS). ALS calls are billed at a higher rate than a Basic Life Support (BLS) call.

We responded to more calls involving men than women. (Only 31.81% of our calls were female.)
 The majority of our patients are Caucasian-White (84.47%).

74.57% of our total patients were 45 years or older. 36.03% of our total patients were ages 55 to 74.
 The average patient age was 61 years in 2015.

75TH STURGIS® MOTORCYCLE RALLY™

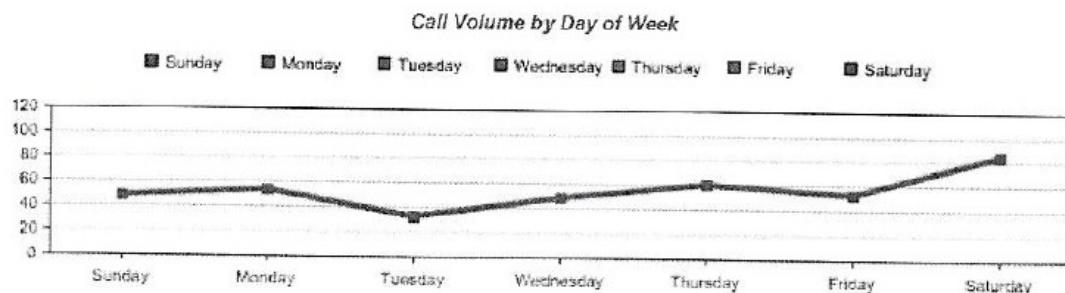
The anniversary of the 75th Sturgis® Motorcycle Rally™ compounded the many unique challenges that the Ambulance Service faces regarding staffing, increased call volume and congestion due to the short-term population increase. We also had the extension of Rally operations that resulted from the City Council's decision to close Main Street to vehicular traffic two days earlier in expectation of the record attendance. Like other City Departments, we increased round the clock shifts three days earlier.

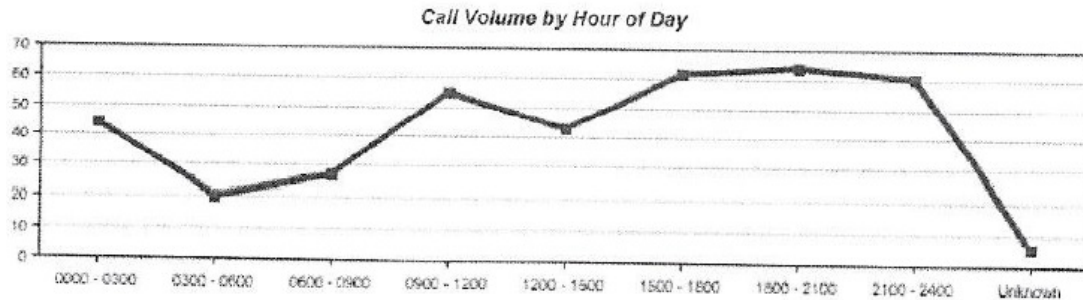
In 2015, the Ambulance Service again staged an ambulance out east of Sturgis during the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally and that decreased response time. This practice was started in 2013. We also provided support to the Buffalo Chip in the form of backboards in order to ensure better patient care and faster transfer when our crews arrived on scene. The Buffalo Chip also agreed to run under the Sturgis Ambulance Service's medical protocols for the same reasons.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TRANSFER*</u>	<u>MEDICAL</u>	<u>TRAUMA</u>	<u>CANCEL</u>	<u>STANDBY</u>	<u>Total Calls</u>	<u>Average per Day</u>
2015 RALLY TOTALS (Extended dates)**	43	286	49	0	4	382	27.29
2014 RALLY TOTALS	52	80	65	9	6	212	19.27
2013 RALLY TOTALS	42	68	80	3	Not Avail.	193	17.55

* Transfers are the movement of patients between medical facilities within the Regional Health System and the VA Health System or between the two health systems.

** The Rally data for 2015 includes all calls between Monday, July 27th through Sunday, August 9th. The data from 2014 and 2013 is just for Thursday through Sunday. However, even acknowledging the three additional days of call reporting, our average call volume per day was up 141% versus the average call volume per day in 2014.

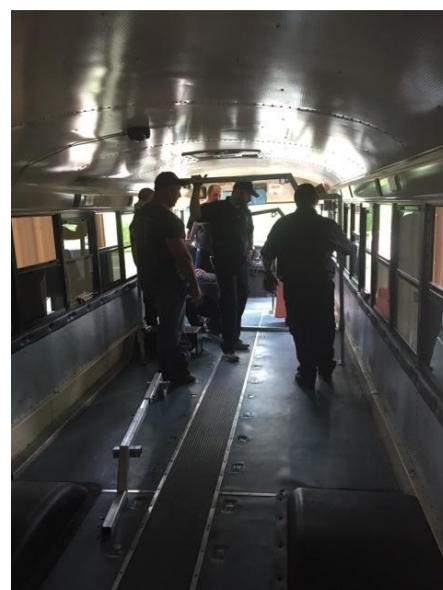




Additionally, in preparation for the 75th Sturgis® Motorcycle Rally™, Director Fischer participated in monthly planning meetings, both at the State level as well as the County level. She also participated in planning meetings with Sturgis Regional Hospital. On behalf of the State EMS Office, Director Fischer reached out to all the local campgrounds to ensure any EMS staff they brought on were properly licensed and certified with the State of South Dakota.

The South Dakota National Guard was activated for training during the 75th Motorcycle Rally™ which allowed the Guard to be deployed more quickly and will full resources in case of a disaster. However, the City was granted an exemption for those employees who worked in public safety so that we were able to employ those employees as usual. In the case of the Ambulance Service that affected 8 employees.

The Ambulance Service, through our partnership with Meade County Emergency Management, outfitted two “ambu-busses”, which allow for mass casualty transportation in the event of a disaster. We received the ambu-bus kits from the North Dakota (State) Department of Health. The Ambulance staff with assistance from other City departments and the Volunteer Fire Department constructed the kits and installed them in the two busses generously loaned to us by Harlows’ Bus Service. We had one staged at the Ambulance Hall in town and one was staged east of town. While we were fortunate and did not have to use these mass casualty resources, it was important to have them available.



STAFFING

The Sturgis Ambulance Service is under the medical direction of Dr. Michael Hogue. Hogue has served as Medical Director since 2012. Dr. Hogue is a board certified family physician who is affiliated with Sturgis Regional Hospital and the Rapid City Regional medical system. Dr. Hogue takes an active role as Medical Director and regularly meets and trains with staff. He reviews the emergency medical protocols regularly to insure compliance with local, state and federal mandates as well as best medical practices. The City is extremely pleased to have Dr. Hogue serve in his capacity of Medical Director for the Sturgis Ambulance Service. His role as Medical Director is solidified through a contract for professional services with the City of Sturgis. The City and Dr. Hogue renewed that contract at the end of 2014.

The Ambulance Service is led by Shawn Fischer, Ambulance Director. She assumed leadership of the Service in 2012 as the Director. She is a Critical Care Paramedic with certifications for pediatric care (PALS), Advanced Life Support (ALS), and PEPP. Director Fischer has 25 years of emergency medicine experience and is also an LPN. Director Fischer is a Certified Ambulance Coder (CAC). In 2015, she received her "Certified Compliance Officer" (CCO) designation to meet Medicare standards. (She is also a certified firefighter.)

In 2015, the Ambulance Service was supported by no Cadets (under 18), 3 EMRs, 19 EMT-Basics, 8 EMT-I85s, 2 EMT-I99, 5 EMT-Advanced, 4 Paramedics, and 11 Critical Care Paramedics. Of these employees, there are 5 full time Critical Care Paramedics (including the Director), 2 half time Critical Care Paramedics, 1 half time Paramedic, 1 half time EMT-I99/Biller, 3 half time EMT-Advanced, and 2 half time EMT-Bs. We do not currently have a supervisor. The Service also has a part-time Mechanic and a full time Administrative Assistant/Biller.

The Service is honored to have 8 active members of the National Guard employed with us.

EMRs (Emergency Medical Responders) must have 80 hours of classroom training, have 10 hours of ride-time, and pass an exam. EMT-Basics must complete 120 hours of classroom training, 12 patient contacts, and pass written and practical exams. They must also complete field training with the Sturgis Ambulance Service on our protocols, etc and demonstrate competence in 143 areas. The EMT-Intermediate designation is a grandfathered certification level and has been superceded by the EMT-Advanced level. However, EMT-Is can maintain that certification level. EMT-Advanced (the new national designation which replaced the EMT-I) must complete 120 additional hours of classroom training (versus EMT-Basics), 32 patient contacts, and complete field training with the Service. (The Advanced certification allows for administration of some drugs (no narcotics) in comparison to the Intermediate certification.) Paramedics must complete an additional 2 years of classroom training (they often receive an Associates' Degree), 300 hours of ride-alongs, and pass written and practical exams. They too must complete a comprehensive field training with the Service demonstrating competence with 143 skills. Critical Care Paramedics must take an additional 80 hours of training and pass a comprehensive exam.

These employees cover 12 and 24 hour shifts as primary crew members. They also come in to serve on standby crews and/or to take transfers between medical facilities. They also respond to major

emergencies (i.e. vehicle accident on the Interstate) to support scheduled crews. The community relies heavily on the expertise and dedication of our part-time employees.

All three of our Billers, including the Ambulance Director, are Certified Ambulance Coders through NAAC (National Academy of Ambulance Coding).

Staffing remains a significant challenge for the Sturgis Ambulance Service. In addition to smaller services (like Hot Springs and Keystone), we compete with the ground transport ambulance services of Rapid City Fire Department (another municipal ambulance service), Lead-Deadwood Ambulance (a subsidiary of Regional Health), and Spearfish Ambulance (a non-profit service). These services all provide benefits to full-time employees. We also compete with the air transport services, Marc Air and Life Flight. As such, we share part-time employees of all certification levels with Rapid Fire, Spearfish Ambulance, Keystone Ambulance, and both air transport services. While we are appreciative of our part-time employees who pick up shift with us on our days off, it does provide significant scheduling challenges as well as limits the availability of employees during crisis situations and for standby status.

However, the recruitment of certified Paramedics is a serious problem in the State and especially West River. (*See “Training” for information on how we are “growing our own” to help solve these recruitment challenges.*) Western Dakota Tech’s Paramedic program is struggling and there are only 4 students enrolled. If they successfully complete the program, they will not do that until May 2017. Unfortunately, this program is not currently a viable pipeline of qualified entry level Paramedics.

On a positive note, our Ambulance Director was successful in assisting the SD Department of Health in



bringing the staffing problem to the notice of the South Dakota Legislature in the 2016 session. Senate Bill 37, which was signed into law by Governor Dugaard, changed the minimum personnel requirements for ambulance services to only require one emergency medical professional plus a trained driver. It also removed the hardship exception so we can qualify for these personnel exceptions. This is crucial for ambulance services, especially those like Sturgis who do a lot of transfers. It does not impact patient care. Because of her behind the scenes support as well as testimony in front of committees, Director Fischer was invited to the bill signing

ceremony in Pierre. This form of continued partnership between the Ambulance Service and our legislators as well as staff representatives in Pierre are very important to implementing changes that can make our Service sustainable into the future.

FINANCIALS

In 2015, billing was handled internally by Department staff.

Two EMS employees have been cross trained and certified as Certified Ambulance Coders (CAC) to handle billing responsibilities. We also have one non-EMS employee who is a certified coder.

Year-end Cash Balance as of December 31, 2015: (\$385,323.34)

Net Accounts Receivable as of December 31, 2015: \$368,835.99

Gross Accounts Receivable: \$1,341,486.91 (*We estimate that \$945,650.92 is uncollectable.*)

2015 Revenue: \$1,184,123.46

Total Operating Expenditures 2015: \$1,297,374.03

Transfer Out: \$0

Depreciation: \$90,057.23

Total Capital Expenditures 2015: \$0

*It is important to note that industry wide, 40 to 60% of accounts receivable are considered uncollectable. The City of Sturgis estimates approximately a 45% uncollectable rate. This percentage is based on our historical revenue and the Ft. Meade (federal) revenue stream. The Service must still bill the full rate, but due to the fact that actual reimbursements are established via contracts with private insurance companies, Medicaid and Medicare for rates lower than the billed rate, reimbursements are actually lower. (This is normal in all medical services and a challenge faced by all providers, not just the Sturgis Ambulance Service.) A smaller percentage of uncollectable is due to non-payment by the patient, in cases where there is no insurance/Medicare/Medicaid coverage. We sent those accounts to collections prior to writing them off.

At the end of 2014, the staff began steps to send uncollected claims to small claims court, partnering with the City Attorney's office.

In 2016, the City did not provide a cost of living adjustment to employees of the Ambulance Service due to the financial situation of the Service at that time.

Medicaid Reimbursement Challenges

The City used the 2016 Legislative Session to begin to educate our legislators about the challenges we face with Medicaid billing. Medicaid is the State's program for low income individuals, families and children. (CHIP is the children's program.) Medicaid is managed by the State's Department of Social Services and SD Administrative Rules of Chapter 16:16 govern Medicaid's covered services and Chapter 16:16:25:03 governs the rates of payment for ground ambulance services. Most seriously, in recent years, the State's Medicaid reimbursements have dropped drastically and are not sufficient to sustain an ambulance service. This will result in significantly reduced emergency medical services to the State's residents, especially rural residents.

And, not only does Medicaid pay at a significantly lower percentage, it does not pay more for a higher level of service provided. This will incentivize ambulance services to become Basic Life Support only services (EMTs only, no Paramedics), which would result in a reduction in patient care.

Level of Care Call Type	Our Charge	Private Insurance	% Paid	Medicare	% Paid	Medicaid	% Paid
Basic Life Support Non Emergency	\$625	\$360	57.60%	\$526.44	35.98%	\$98.56	15.77%
Basic Life Support Emergency	\$725	\$576	79.45%	\$626.44	49.63%	\$98.56	13.59%
Advanced Life Support Non-Emergency	\$750	\$432	57.60%	\$530.02	35.98%	\$219.98	29.33%
Advanced Life Support Emergency	\$850	\$684	80.47%	\$630.02	50.27%	\$219.98	25.88%
Advanced Life Support 2	\$1,050	\$990	94.29%	\$830.02	58.90%	\$219.98	20.95%
Specialty Care Transport	\$1,500	\$1169	77.93%	\$1,280.02	48.73%	\$219.98	14.67%
Mileage (All Calls)	\$13/mile	\$12/mile	92.31%	\$10.12/mile	55.62%	\$2.88/mile	22.15%

Medicare is the federal program for elderly and disabled persons.

Medicaid is the State program for low-income individuals, family and children.

Unfortunately, this conversation about Medicaid funding challenges with our legislators is one that was not resolved and will continue in the 2017 session.

Further, complicating the conversation, is the fact that the Governor has indicated that he will again request that the Legislature expand Medicaid eligibility in the 2017 session. Increasing Medicaid and Medicare eligible persons will only increase the percentage of Ambulance Service patients whose care is reimbursed at a non-sustainable rate.

TRAINING

Certified EMTs are required to perform 96 hours of continuing education every two years. The Sturgis Ambulance Service hosts the training necessary for our EMTs to retain their certification by using staff Paramedics and local resources to provide the training in house. EMTs from Enning, Whitewood, Belle Fourche, and Newell have attended this training in the past in order to keep their certifications.

In 2015, the Ambulance Director continued to provide EMT continuing education training to the Newell Ambulance Service in order to help them keep their certifications current. This benefits our Ambulance Service by having trained EMS in the Newell response area. We provide intercept service to Newell but do not want to service as that area's primary EMS responder.

The Service also believes in providing employees with the opportunity to enhance their skills within their service designation as well as to increase level of provider service.

In 2014, the Ambulance Service also hosted an EMT-Advanced course for interested EMTs. The course was completed in 2015. We had 3 EMTs from the Sturgis area test and successfully certify. (Others in the course were sponsored by the Piedmont Volunteer Fire Department.)

In 2014, the Ambulance Service sponsored interested Paramedics to work for their Critical Care designation. 5 Paramedics successfully tested in early 2015. This allows us to provide a higher level of care in our community. An added benefit is the ability to charge higher rates for this care, increasing our revenue stream.

In 2015, the Ambulance Service also hosted an EMT-Basic course. As of December 31st, the course was not yet completed, but we had 19 enrolled (10 from the Sturgis area). This serves as workforce development of local, certified first responders as we hired several graduates on a part-time basis. This helps mitigate some of the staffing challenges by “growing our own”.

In late 2015, the Ambulance Service sponsored 8 current employees in good standing to study to become Paramedics through a 12 month, online educational Paramedicine program through Crowder College (Missouri). *(There are no online programs in South Dakota. We had attempted to set one up through Western Dakota Tech but were unsuccessful in working out the logistical details.)* This program started in January 2016 and the students will complete in December 2016.

EQUIPMENT

The Service has 6 ambulances that are in service and used regularly.



Year	Make/Model	2015 Mileage	2014 Mileage
2003	Ford Med Tec II (van)	91,566	89,393
2003	Ford Med Tec II (van)	91,043	86,872
2007	Ford Med Tec III (S1)	145,152	128,431
2010	Chev Med Tec III (S4)	213,974	180,531
2012	Ford Wheeled Coach 4X4 (S5)	23,268	20,694
2013	Chevy Wheeled Coach (S6)	122,609	72,787

We did not purchase any coaches in 2015. During 2015 Rally, the Service leased two ambulances to ensure adequate vehicles for the increased call volume. We were again unable to secure ambulances as part of a sponsorship contract.

The Service has two LUCAS™ Chest Compression System machines that we received in 2014, at no cost, through funding from The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust. The value of these machines is approximately \$30,000 each.

We do not have a ventilator. For inter-facility transfers requiring automated breathing, we sometimes are able to borrow a ventilator from the transferring facility. If we are unable to borrow one, staff is forced to bag the patient the whole way.

INSURANCE / LIABILITY

The Service maintains comprehensive liability insurance covering all aspects of operations and administration of the Sturgis Ambulance Service. Meade County is listed as an additional insured. This also covers Dr. Hogue in his capacity as Medical Director.

OUTREACH

The Ambulance Service hosts monthly CPR classes at the Fire Hall. These are open to the public at no charge. These are often attended by parents or day care providers. It has been shown that starting CPR before the arrival of EMS actually increases a person's chance of survival. The more members of the general public that are CPR trained the better!

The Service also hosted two blood drives in 2015 (one in March and another as part of EMS Week).

As part of National EMS Week in May 2015, the Sturgis Ambulance Service hosted station tours for elementary school children and had more than 600 students through the facility. These tours provide a safe and educational format in which children can meet the professionals who care for their families in a time of emergency. They taught teaching children how to make good 9-1-1 calls. Kids met our emergency providers and saw the inside of an ambulance. Making children familiar with EMS helps everyone involved in of an emergency situation.

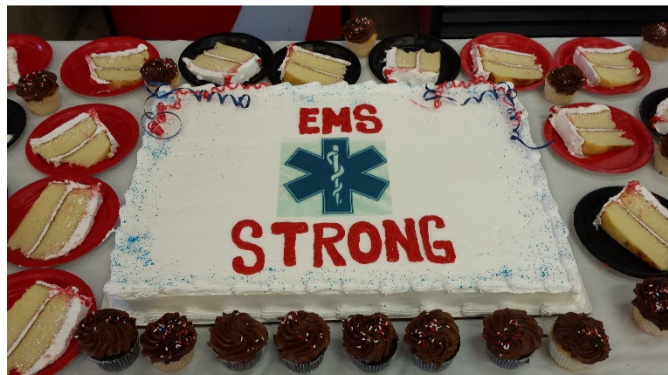
The Ambulance Service also hosted a well-attended public open house, which showcased not only the capabilities of our EMS service, but also provided a venue for the SD Highway Patrol rollover simulator, the NFS Firewise program, the Masonic Child Identification Program, and State of South Dakota's *Protect your Melon* helmet program, which gave out more than 100 helmets. Approximately 300 people attended the Open House. The public also got to see the high tech equipment that is used by our Ambulance Service to provide 24-7 ALS support to our community and surrounding response area of more than 500 square miles. They had demonstrations of the LUCAS™ machines as well as tours of the ambulance rigs.



Critical Care Paramedic Nicole Skouge gave tours through the giant heart inflatable, which was generously provided by Sanford Health.



In addition to all that, the Ambulance Service also took to heart this year's national theme of *EMS Strong*. As part of EMS Week, the Ambulance Service hosted numerous community outreach events in honor of EMS Week, including basic health screenings, community blood drive, 5k/10k run and walk as well as an interagency softball game.



In 2015, we again offered community members the chance to buy an EMS Week t-shirt and “turn Sturgis green”, showing their support for our emergency responders.



The Sturgis Ambulance Service provides ride-along opportunities for Paramedic and EMT students in the Western Dakota Tech as well as for our own training programs. The service continues to have the positive reputation as one of the better places to do ride-alongs due to the professionalism of the staff and the number of calls. Further, students are extremely likely to have a patient contact during a 12 hour shift.

The Ambulance Service highly promotes seatbelt use, firmly believing that seatbelts save lives. In September, they presented all 5th graders at Bear Butte Elementary with a seat belt cover. They encouraged the kids to give it to someone they want to wear their seatbelt on a (more) regular basis. The kids then wrote an essay about why they gave the seat belt cover to that particular person. A boy and a girl were selected as winners and received a Mr. Movies certificate. The children who wrote essays also got a t-shirt celebrating that they “Saved a Life”. *(The Ambulance Service was recognized at the State level for this campaign. See “Awards and Recognition”.)*



Another seatbelt educational outreach program that the Ambulance Service assisted with took place in November 2015. Employees from the Ambulance Service, along with the Sturgis Police Department, Sturgis Volunteer Fire Department, National Guard and High School representatives, checked seat belts at the High School as part of this seatbelt awareness campaign.

The High School students did great – above 90% were wearing a seatbelt. By comparison, Meade County’s average for seatbelt safety is 59.9% (which is a dismal 63rd out of 66 counties in South Dakota and well below the national average of 86%).

The Ambulance Service in conjunction with the Sturgis Police Department, SD Highway Patrol, Life Flight, and Sturgis Volunteer Fire Department participated in the Freshmen Impact mock activity / simulation on Wednesday, November 18th. This is the 4th year we have partnered with the Meade 46-1 School District and many other organizations and agencies in this 4th annual simulation, which helps teach freshmen how bad decisions can permanently affect their lives.



Finally, with Council approval, the Ambulance Service provided emergency medical services at the PRCA Rodeo, the High School Rodeo, the BAM Festival, the Tatanka 100 races, the Super Moto Race, and, during the Rally, the ½ Mile Races at the Sturgis Fairgrounds.

Finally, the Sturgis EMS Association is affiliated with the Sturgis Ambulance Service.

INTERAGENCY PARTNERSHIPS

The Sturgis Ambulance Service is dispatched by Meade County Sheriff Office. The Director meets regularly with the Sheriff to discuss challenges that may arise with dispatching of 911 calls.

In 2015, the Ambulance Service entered a contract for professional services with the Meade County Jail. Under this contract, the Ambulance Service provides medical support, replacing the full-time nurse position that was vacant. This partnership allows for better patient care for the inmates as well as improved emergency response, in case of a 9-1-1 incident. This contract also helps to financially support the 10am to 10pm shift (third daytime), providing a consistent revenue stream to offset the additional costs of this staffing. This contract was initiated in October 2015 and was for a 6 month trial period. It is anticipated that the contract will continue for another 6 month evaluation period, so that the Ambulance Service can evaluate the year round impacts and benefits.

The Ambulance Service has continued to work diligently in the past year to maintain and foster relationships with other agencies, including Sturgis Police Department, Meade County Sheriff's Office, Sturgis Volunteer Fire Department, Fort Meade VA Hospital, Rapid City Fire, Spearfish Ambulance Service, the Regional Hospital System, Enning Ambulance, Newell Ambulance, and other smaller services. Late in 2015, the Ambulance Service began attending Rally planning meetings with stakeholders from through the Black Hills and State government in order to prepare for the 75th Rally.

Sturgis Regional Hospital has a Level 4 Trauma rating with the State. Our partnership with the hospital is vitally important to keeping this level of certification. As such, the Director meets monthly with hospital staff to review all trauma cases that were treated at Sturgis Regional Hospital.

Director Fischer is the Secretary for the South Dakota Ambulance Association. This organization was formed to help all ambulance services on the challenges that all ambulance services face in South Dakota.

Additionally, the Director sits on the South Dakota Ambulance Directors' Board. This 6 member board meets every other month and represents all ambulance services (public and private) in the State.

The Ambulance Director continues to sit on the Stakeholders group that is advising the State on the transition of EMS from the Department of Public Safety to the Department of Health. This is a positive organizational transition and we are honored to have a seat at the table as this transition is put into motion.

Finally, the Sturgis Ambulance Service works closely with the Meade 46-1 School District and supports their mission. In addition to the Freshman Impact program, each year the Sturgis Ambulance Service participates in the Career Fair at Sturgis Brown High School and an ambulance is also present at high school football games and wrestling matches.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

The Sturgis Ambulance Service was recognized at the State level for its professionalism, dedication, and community outreach.

The Sturgis Ambulance Service was the recipient of the *2015 1st place EMS Week Award Winner* for their tremendous impact on our community. The EMS Award is given as a thank you from the Office of Highway Safety and SD Emergency Medical Services for Children for extraordinary efforts in safety communication and education that make a difference in their area. The Sturgis Ambulance Service won a Thomas EMS Advanced Life Support Pediatric Pack (complete pre-hospital pediatric pack) valued at over \$1,000.

The Sturgis Ambulance Service also received the *1st Place Award* in the *2015 Back to School Seatbelt Campaign*. The challenge was given to promote seatbelt use in the community of the service area. The prize for the Ambulance Service's efforts was a Quantum ACR4 Child Restraint System (ambulance child restraint/transportation system designed for 4 to 99 lbs.), valued at \$750.

Also, the SD Emergency Medical Services for Children introduced a new award at the 2015 40th Anniversary SD EMS Association Conference in Spearfish, the *South Dakota Heroes Making A Difference Award*. This award will only be given to an agency that regularly goes above and beyond in promoting safety and injury prevention. Agencies receiving this award are inspirational with their passion, exceptional with their contributions, and outstanding in their accomplishments to the health and well-being of their community members. The Sturgis Ambulance Service was the first ever recipient of this award.



Sturgis Ambulance Staff receiving awards at 2015 EMS Conference

Critical Care Paramedics Nicole Skouge and Annie Lukesh also placed 2nd in Sanford Trauma Wars. This competition is held annually at the State Conference. It consists of a two person team that are presented with an informative scenario and a moulaged (staged with mock injuries) patient. The team follows the standard care listed in the EMT-B curriculum, BLS Protocols and Prehospital Trauma Life Support. Teams were required to complete a rapid yet thorough trauma assessment and initiate care and management. Various pieces of prehospital equipment and supplies were available during the completion. Each team had 10 minutes to complete the competition and were scored accordingly on the care they provided. There were a total of 14 teams that participated with 5 of them being Sturgis Ambulance Teams. Nicole and Annie scored perfect and it came down to just the time between first and second place.



Critical Care Paramedics Nicole Skouge and Anni Lukesh (third and second from right) receive award

Finally, Director Shawn Fischer was honored to receive the President's Award. The President's Award is an award that is presented annually to a member who, in the opinion of the SDEMSA President, has been instrumental in furthering the goals and objectives of EMS in South Dakota and who is an active member of the SDEMSA. There have been I believe only 17-18 awards given since its inception.

To paraphrase of the award presentation, Director Fischer was chosen for this award because of her efforts to further support the SDEMSA along with the being instrumental with the Ambulance Directors Association. In conjunction with the previously mentioned, her leadership has taken the Sturgis and Meade County community's ambulance service to be one of the best in the State and continuously striving for better. Her service and her community are fortunate to have a service as strong and thriving as it is and great leadership keeps it moving in the right direction when several services around the state are failing to thrive.



Director Shawn Fischer receiving the prestigious President's Award

This year the Ambulance Service also partnered with the Meade County Times-Tribune to highlight an EMS provider each week. The paper included a photo of the EMS provider as well as a short biography

that included career information, family life, interests, goals and a safety tip. Needless to say, it was a fun perk for the staff, but it was well received by the community as well.

The Sturgis Ambulance Service does keep up a Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/SturgisAmbulance>

UPCOMING FOR 2016

The Ambulance Service is preparing for the 76th Sturgis® Motorcycle Rally™. While estimates put the attendance at this Rally below where it was last year, all levels of government continue to meet regularly to prepare for this event. The Ambulance Director is very involved in those conversations.

The Ambulance Services are still awaiting a decision by the State regarding the future of a “Community Paramedic” program in South Dakota. This type program encourages hospital and clinics to make use of paramedics to make home checkups and thereby reduce the need for patients to revisit hospitals and clinics. Rapid Fire was successfully able to petition the Board of Osteopath for an ‘exception’ allowing them to begin to implement a Community Paramedic program in their response area. Community Paramedics do require additional training and certifications as they have additional scope of practice. (For example, they can do wound care.) In 2016, the Sturgis Ambulance Service will be considering the feasibility of this type program in our community.

The Sturgis Regional Hospital is going to be beginning a multi-million dollar expansion of its facility on Junction Avenue in Sturgis. As a result of this expansion, the services currently provided at Massa Berry Regional Medical Clinic will be relocated to the new campus. At this time, we do not anticipate any change to the demand by Sturgis Regional for transfer support.

The Sturgis community is also undergoing a population growth as more than 120 residents are being built within City limits in 2016 – 2018. This has the potential to increase our population, which will increase 9-1-1 emergent calls for service.

Finally, the Service is still planning to develop new protocols allowing Registered Nurses (RNs) to serve in an emergency medical capacity. Currently, they can provide the level of care that an EMT-Basic does (i.e. cannot administer medication, start IVs, or intubate a patient, all considered “advanced” care), regardless of actual level of care that they can provide in a hospital or clinic facility. Therefore, a bridge program is needed to allow an RN to perform at the ACLS level of care, similar to the level provided by a Paramedic. The State Ambulance Association is working with the Department of Health to develop and implement this bridge program.

The City of Sturgis continues to use the CodeRed Emergency Notification System, which allows us to communicate in major incident involving EMS (i.e. mass casualty car accidents, etc.).

CONTACT INFORMATION

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